

## Message Text

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64

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

OMB-01 RSR-01 /104 W

----- 108389

R 311050Z AUG 73

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 650

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0966

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, CH

SUBJ: IMPRESSIONS OF WANG HUNG-WEN

1. CCP'S NEW NUMBER THREE, THE YOUNG PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN WANG HUNG-WEN HAS HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH AMERICANS ON TWO OCCASIONS, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE. THE FIRST WAS DURING AN IMPROMPTU CALL BY CHOU EN-LAI ON SECRETARY ROGERS IN SHANGHAI ON FEBRUARY 27, 1972. WANG, THE JUNIOR OF THE CHINESE PRESENT (CHOU, SHANGHAI PARTY BOSS CHANG CH'UN-CH'IAO, AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHI P'ENG-FEI), LOOKED STERN, STIFF AND ILL AT EASE. HE WAS DRESSED IN A WELL CUT NEW MAO SUIT AND WORE SHORT BLACK LEATHER BOOTS WHICH SEEMED ODDLY UNPROLETARIAN FOR A MAN REPUTED TO BE SHANGHAI RADICAL. IN RELAXED CONTRAST, NEXT TO WANG ON THE SOFA SAT CHI P'ENG-FEI, CHATTING AMIABLY, HIS LEGS CROSSED, THE CUFFS OF HIS LONG UNDERWEAR PEEKING OUT BENEATH THE CUFFS OF HIS BAGGY TROUSERS AND OVER HIS SCUFFED OLD SHOES. WANG LEFT HAVING  
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SAID HARDLY A WORD.

2. THE NEXT CONTACT OCCURRED AT THE SINO-AMERICAN BASKETBALL GAME THIS JUNE. GREETING THE COACHES OF THE AMERICAN BASKETBALL AND SWIMMING TEAMS ALONG WITH MADAME MAO AND SHANGHAI NO. 2 YAO WEN-YUAN, WANG APPEARED RELAXED, CONFIDENT AND VERY SELF-POSSESSED. HIS PRESENCE WAS IMPOSING ESPECIALLY IN CONTRAST WITH THE RUMPLED YAO WEN-YUAN, TO WHOM WANG MADE A POINT OF DEFERRING. DURING A HALF TIME EXCHANGE OF SMALL TALK, WE FOUND HIM POLITE BUT COOL, AND TIGHT-LIPPED ABOUT HIS BACKGROUND. HE DID LET FALL THAT HE WAS BORN IN KIRIN PROVINCE, HOWEVER.

3. WE THINK WANG WAS PICKED FOR HIGH OFFICE BECAUSE OF HIS YOUTH, ACCEPTABILITY TO ALL FACTIONS IN THE LEADERSHIP, AND COMPETENCE. MAO AND CHOU, THEIR OWN TIMES NEARING, AND INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER THE PROBLEM OF CULTIVATING SUCCESSORS, KNEW THE NEED FOR YOUNG BLOOD HIGH IN THE PARTY. THE YOUNGER GENERATION, HOPES RAISED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION THEN SQUASHED BY THE REALITY OF HARD LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, NEED THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PROOF THAT ONE OF THEM CAN MAKE IT.

4. WANG HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A PROTEGE OF MADAME MAO AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO. TO THESE WE MUST NOW ADD MAO AND CHOU, WITHOUT WHOSE BLESSING HE WOULD NEVER HAVE ACHIEVED HIS CURRENT PROMINENCE. HE IS A PRODUCT OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, WITH A GOOD RECORD AS AN ORGANIZER.

5. WHAT IMPACT WANG WILL HAVE REMAINS, OF COURSE, TO BE SEEN. HE DID NOT FIGHT FOR HIS JOB THE WAY THE OLDER GENERATION OF PARTY LEADERS DID. RATHER HE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HANDPICKED AND GROOMED BY POWERFUL PROTECTORS, MORE A PROMISING YOUNG EXECUTIVE IN A LARGE, WELL ESTABLISHED CORPORATION, THAN A POWERFUL FIGURE WHOSE SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE CONSENSUS OR LEADERSHIP. SURROUNDED BY SOLICITOUS ELDERS WHO WILL SOON RETIRE AND JEALOUS COLLEAGUES WHO WILL NOT, WANG MUST BUILD HIS OWN POWER BASE WITHIN THE PARTY IF HE IS TO DEVELOP BEYOND THE YOUNG SYMBOL HE NOW REPRESENTS, AND SURVIVE THE PASSING OF HIS PROTECTORS.

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